

IS MEMORY, HABIT, AND IMITATION

observation or enquiry. This is the condition of a people who are completely dominated by the authority of a religion, or superstition, which provides a specious explanation for every incident of man's experience. Without scepticism there can be no enquiry : science can make no appeal to a mind which attributes every happening to the visioned intervention of Providence or Fate. Such is, generally, the state of Oriental peoples. and they owe to it that they are so indifferent to new impressions, so firmly addicted to traditional practices. We may see in the material progress of the Japanese the effect of a strongly developed scepticism, which urges them to receive new ideas with attention and to investigate them carefully before rejecting them. A Turk, a Persian, an Indian is politely inattentive to suggestions for the improvement of his agriculture or processes of manufacture. A Japanese listens to them with the keenest interest.

So far considered habit is the enemy of freedom. But, with the strange contrariety which we may discern everywhere in life, it is also a means of gaining freedom. It enables us to redistribute the strain of the shackles with which we are fettered from our birth. By facilitating the action of particular instinctive impulses, it subjects us more strongly to their

influence. and
proportionately weakens the influence
of impulses
which compete with them. Often.
indeed. the
result is harmful. The propensity to
drink is
reinforced by indulgence : so may a
child become
addicted to sucking its thumb, or
biting
nails—proclivities which are
outgrowths of the
instinctive actions of sucking and
mastication.